

## **Defense and Jobs Bill**

House leaders plan to move legislation this week to allow Congress to finish its work for the year. On Wednesday, the House will consider a package including the fiscal 2010 Defense appropriations bill, the last of the 12 regular spending bills for the fiscal year that began October 1st. The measure will carry provisions extending unemployment benefits, subsidized COBRA health insurance for those who have lost their jobs and extensions of several other policies that would otherwise expire.

Within days after the consideration of the Defense bill, the House will consider a separate jobs bill that would provide about \$75 billion to fund infrastructure projects and prevent state and local governments from laying off more teachers, police officers and firefighters as they struggle to close their own budget gaps. The Senate will not act on that bill this year, but House leaders want members to be able to go home for the holidays saying they voted to address constituents' concerns about double digit unemployment numbers.

## **Health Care Overhaul**

Today, Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (I-CT) indicated that he is ready to give Senate Democrats the 60th vote they need to pass a stripped-down health care overhaul bill. Lieberman said that if a government-run "public option" is out and Democrats drop a Medicare buy-in plan for people ages 55-64, and if there are no attempts to add other alternatives of that type, "then I'm getting toward that position where I can say what I've wanted to say all along, that I'm ready to vote for health care reform."

Lieberman's comments came about two hours before the 60-member Senate Democratic Caucus, with which he aligns, was to go to the White House to hear a final plea from President Obama for a vote this month on the health care overhaul, one of the president's top legislative priority.

*(Source: Congressional Quarterly)*